

Prickly

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Summary: Tully has a run in with a cactus while on a mission.

Prickly

****Disclaimer: **_**The Rat Patrol**_** is not my property. They come out to play sometimes, then I send them home.****

****Prickly****

****By Suzie2b****

****The alarm went off an hour before dawn. Tully reached over and turned it off before turning the lamp on. He started to sit up, but Charley's arm tightened around him. He kissed the top of her head and smiled. "I have to get ready to go, sweetheart."****

****Charley snuggled against him and sighed. "Not yet."****

****Tully chuckled and gently moved her arm. Charley groaned when he got out of bed. As he started to get dressed, she rolled onto her stomach and laid her head on her arms to watch him. "How long are you going to be gone?"****

*****Maybe two weeks at most.*****

*****And you can't tell me anything about where you're going or what's going to happen.*****

****Tully sat on the bed to tie his boots. "Nope. Don't know myself yet. Troy's going to fill us in some time after breakfast." He straightened up and rubbed his hand against her bare back.****

****Charley got to her knees, put her arms around Tully's neck and kissed him hard on the mouth. He wrapped his arms around her and**

pulled her close. When they finally parted, Charley whispered, "I miss you already."**

Tully grinned. "You keep this up and you're going to make me late."

After a quick breakfast, Troy had Hitch and Tully head south until they reached a waterhole 32 kilometers from German territory. They gathered around as he spread a map on the hood of one of the jeeps. Troy pointed to a spot on the map and said, "We're heading for Jeddah."

Moffitt looked at the map. "That's over eight hundred kilometers over enemy lines."

"**High Command wants us to kidnap a German general by the name of Felix ****KÄñig." Troy laid a picture of the general on top of the map. "Our operatives stationed in Jeddah say he's at a stronghold about fifty kilometers west of there."**

"**General KÄñig is one of Germany's highest ranking officers."**

Troy nodded. "Command believes we'll be able to get in and out easier than if a squad were sent in."

Hitch asked, "What does High Command want with the general anyway?"

Troy sighed. "They didn't even tell Captain Boggs that information. We are to get in, grab the general, and get him back to base. That's all I know."

A little more than ten hours later the Rat Patrol was just outside of Jeddah. From there they drove west for another hour until the stronghold came into view in the distance. They took cover behind a rocky outcrop where they would be able to watch the German's comings and goings.

Troy checked the area with binoculars and said, "We'll keep an eye on things for a few days and get a feel for what's going on." He handed the binoculars to Tully and pointed to the top of the outcrop. "Go up top and keep your eyes open."

Tully lay on the flat top of the outcrop for two hours. The sun was low in the sky when he saw a German scout column lumber towards the stronghold's opened gates. A half hour later another column showed up from a different direction.

Hitch climbed up to lay next to Tully. "Sarge wants you to go down and get something to eat. Have you seen anything?"

Tully handed Hitch the binoculars. "Their patrols are coming in for the night. Seen two so far. A staff car arrived a few minutes ago, but I couldn't see who was in it. Keep an eye on the gates. Could be they leave 'em open during the day."

The next morning they had to move to a different position when one of the German patrols headed in their direction. There were four scout columns sent out that morning.

After lunch, Tully was on watch again. The gates remained open, but Moffitt had told him that nothing had moved since the patrols had left. Then a staff car drove out of the gates. The top was down and Tully focused on who was in it.

The others looked up as Tully ran down the hill. When he stopped, Troy asked, "What'd you see?"

Tully replied, "German staff car just rolled out and was headed east. Looked like General **KÃ¶nig was the passenger."**

***All right. You and Hitch follow that car. Find out where they're going and then get back here."**

Hitch and Tully followed the staff car to Jeddah. They left the jeep at the bottom of a hill and went up to take a look.

Hitch questioned, "Do you think we should try to find out where the general is in there?"

Tully shook his head. "Sarge said to find out where they were going. They went to Jeddah. We'd better start back now."

Then they saw the staff car leave the town without its passenger. Hitch and Tully started to hurry down the hill, but the loose gravel made Tully lose his footing and he tumbled to the bottom.

Hitch grabbed his friend's arm and helped him up. "You okay?"

Tully put weight on his right leg and hissed with pain. He looked down and saw cactus spines sticking out of the side of his lower leg and knee.

Hitch walked around and checked Tully's leg. Then they both looked up at the squat cactus that sat alone on the side of the hill. Hitch said, "We need to get these needles out."

Tully shook his head. "No time. We need to get back to Troy and Moffitt with what we know."

Hitch pulled to a stop at camp and Troy growled, "What happened to you two? That staff car is already back inside."

***Sorry, sarge. Ran into a little trouble." Hitch grabbed a med kit and walked around the jeep to help Tully.**

Troy's frown deepened as he followed Hitch. "What happened?"

***Tully tangled with a cactus."**

The sergeant saw at least a dozen spines sticking out of the private's leg and grabbed his other arm to help. They got Tully seated on a rock with his leg stretched out in front of him and Troy said, "Hitch, go relieve Moffitt on watch."

Hitch handed him the med kit. "Right, sarge."

A minute later Moffitt was at Tully's side. "Hitch said you had a run in with a cactus."

Tully sighed. "Yeah, the only cactus for miles and I hit it when I fall."

Moffitt knelt down and inspected the spines. "Well, they're going to have to come out. It's going to sting a bit."

***Already does."**

As Moffitt began to carefully pull the spines out, Troy said, "So where did the general go?"

Tully gritted his teeth, then said, "Jeddah. His driver dropped him off in town somewhere and left."

Twenty minutes later, Moffitt was finished and Tully pulled his pant leg up. He found more spines that had broken off under the material. Moffitt got a pair of tweezers and went back to work pulling them out.

A few minutes later, Moffitt looked up at his patient. "Doing okay, Tully?"

He nodded as he grimaced. "I'll live."

***Almost done. Then we'll get you cleaned up and bandaged."**

For three days they watched General **KÃ¶nig leave the stronghold every afternoon after lunch and return in the evening.**

When Moffitt relieved Tully as look out, he limped to the jeep and got the med kit before sitting on the rock with his back to Troy and Hitch. He lifted his pant leg and removed the bandage. There was a red and swollen area just below his knee. Tully knew Moffitt hadn't been able to get all of the spines out because they'd broken off under the skin.

Troy looked at his back. "How's the leg, Tully?"

***A little sore, but it's okay. Just thought I'd change the bandage."**

Hitch got up and walked towards him. "Are you sure? You've been limping quite a bit."

**Tully quickly covered the infection with his pant leg. "Yeah. There's still a few spines under the skin and they're irritating." Hitch knelt next to him and reached to move the pant leg. Tully

grabbed his wrist to stop him. "I said I'm okay."**

Hitch looked at him. "Why don't I believe you?"

Troy joined them. "Let him take a look, Tully."

He sighed and released his friend's arm.

Hitch moved Tully's pant leg up over his knee. He winced and said, "It's infected all right."

Troy frowned at his private. "When did you first notice it?"

Tully didn't look up at the sergeant. "This morning."

"**Why didn't you say something?"**

Tully shrugged. "I thought if I kept it clean it would clear up on its own. I didn't want to jeopardize the mission."

Hitch stood and said, "I'm gonna get Moffitt. He's better with these things than I am."

Troy sighed. "Look, Tully, when you're hurt you only jeopardize the mission by not taking care of yourself."

Moffitt knelt next to his driver and looked at Tully's leg. "I don't think it's too bad â€| at least not yet. It should be drained though."

Water was heating as Moffitt got his penknife out to sterilize. First he used Troy's lighter on the blade, then cleaned it thoroughly with alcohol. Troy swabbed the infected area with an alcohol soaked gauze square.

Moffitt looked at Tully. "Are you ready?"

Tully said, "No â€| but let's get this over with."

As Moffitt made a shallow incision about an inch long in the skin, Troy held Tully's leg still. Tully gritted his teeth and gripped Troy's arm. Pus oozed from the wound. Moffitt laid the knife aside and gently squeezed the area to drain it. When bright red blood started to flow, he pressed a piece of gauze against the wound to stop the bleeding.

Troy looked the pale young man. "How's it going, Tully."

He sighed as the pain began to abate. "It's goin'."

Moffitt flushed the wound carefully with warm water, then he applied a generous amount of sulfa powder in the incision. He placed a clean dressing over the wound and wrapped it snugly before taping it in place. "There, how's that feel?"

Tully nodded. "Actually, it feels better than it did. Thanks, doc."

**Moffitt shook two aspirin out of the bottle and Troy handed the

private a canteen as he said, "Take it easy for a while. I think we'll make our move tomorrow."**

Early the next afternoon, Moffitt and Tully left to wait for General **KÃ¶nig's staff car at a point where the kidnapping wouldn't be seen. Troy and Hitch watched the general's staff car leave the stronghold and then followed at a safe distance.**

When Moffitt spotted the car, he got into the back of the jeep. "Here they come, Tully."

As he pulled the jeep out to block the road, Moffitt primed the 50 caliber.

By the time the staff car's driver realized it was an American jeep, it was too late. He threw the car in reverse in an attempt to get away, but Troy and Hitch rolled up behind them.

Moffitt called, "Schalten Sie den Auto und lege ihr die HÃ¤nde auf."

The driver turned the engine off and both men put their hands up. **General ****KÃ¶nig raged, "What is the meaning of this?"**

Troy hopped out of one jeep and Tully got out of the other. "Sorry, general, Army High Command wants to have a word with you." He pointed a machine gun at him. "If you wouldn't mind getting out of the car, we'll be on our way."

The general exited the car. "You'll never make it back to your lines with me."

Tully confiscated the general's side arm before he hauled the driver out of the car, who had noticed the private's limp. When Tully reached for the gun on the driver's hip, his arm was suddenly grabbed and his legs kicked out from under him. He went down and Troy fired, killing the driver.

Troy didn't take his eyes off the general as he said, "You okay, Tully?"

He grimaced as he stood up. "Yeah, I'm good."

***Hitch, help Tully get the car and driver out of sight." Troy took General KÃ¶nig to the jeep. "Have a seat, sir." Once the general was in the passenger seat, Troy handcuffed him.**

General KÃ¶nig glowered at the sergeant. "You really think you can pull this off, don't you? When my men discover I'm missing it won't take them long to catch up to us."

Troy smiled slightly. "By the time your men figure out you're missing, we'll be hours ahead of them, general."

Tully limped back to the jeep and Moffitt asked, "Are you all right to drive?"

Tully got in behind the wheel. "I'm fine, sarge.

They drove for five hours before they took a break to check Tully's leg. It was sore and had bled a bit after being kicked, but all in all it wasn't as bad and Moffitt had feared.

Tully gave the sergeant a smile. "Told you I was fine.

Moffitt returned the smile. "But usually when you say that after getting hurt, it's not true." He put some more sulfa powder in the wound before adding a clean dressing and bandaging it. As he taped it in place, he asked, "Want me to drive for a while?"

***Nah. My right leg doesn't have much of a job to do, but I'll keep it in mind for later maybe.**

It was nearly midnight when the two jeeps rolled into Ras Tanura. They left *General KÄnig in a cell with the MPs. Then Troy and Hitch headed for the motor pool while Moffitt went to medical with Tully.**

The doctor on duty checked Tully's wound, cleaned it before putting in a few stitches, and bandaging **it again. He was given a shot of penicillin and sent home. Moffitt dropped Tully in front of the cafÃ© where the apartment was located and took the jeep to the motor pool.**

Tully limped down the alley and up the stairs. He stopped at the bathroom to clean up before going down the hall and letting himself into the apartment. As he undressed and dropped his dirty clothes in the basket, the bedside light came on.

Tully turned to see Charley sitting up in bed with one of his shirts on. He grinned at her mussed hair and groggy stare. "Sorry. Didn't mean to wake you.

Charley smiled. "You're back sooner than I expected. Everything go okay?"

Tully crossed the room and started to get into bed. "Yep. Mission accomplished.

Charley saw his bandaged leg. "What happened to your leg?"

***Tangled with a cactus. I saw a doctor before coming home." Tully pulled the covers over himself and leaned in for a passionate kiss. He started to unbutton the shirt. "I'm home now. You don't need this.**

Charley grinned as the shirt slid off. "Welcome home, lover.

End
file.